The University of Chicago

The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907

A PART OF
A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
1934

BY
ROGERS PLATT CHURCHILL

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RECEPTION OF THE CONVENTION

SUCH a remarkable achievement as the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian convention could not be long concealed. From time to time during the negotiations, especially in the last half year, rumors of their existence appeared in the public prints of Europe. Occasionally a shrewd summary of the probable terms of agreement was published, but more often the versions were marked by their misinformation. This could lead to undesirable comments, and Izvolsky in particular wished to escape such annoyance, since he was sensitive to press criticisms, by the disclosure of the official text at the earliest possible moment. The British were in less of a hurry. Nicolson preferred that there should be no announcement in advance of official publication, and proposed that no detailed notice should be released until the government of India had placed a copy into the hands of the Amir of Afghanistan. Izvolsky agreed, and the British government saw no objection to the announcement of the fact of signature in the Sunday papers on 1 September, although Izvolsky was admonished not to allow the outlines of the agreement to leak out, even by means of an indiscretion.[a] It was not easy to keep Izvolsky in line. He soon complained that he must give something to the Russian press, which was "clamoring for information" and "abusing him for his silence."[b] The Russian acting minister for foreign affairs, M. Gubastov, informed Nicolson that he understood that Izvolsky might let the influential journal, *Novoye Vremya*, have an outline of the convention around the middle of September. Nicolson tried to forestall any premature revelation, but he had little hope that secrecy would last more than a few days longer.[c] The break came on 6/19

[a] *B. D.*, IV, no. 511, p. 572; no. 513, pp. 573-574. *G. P.*, XXV, part I, no. 8534, p. 40. This was the real reason for the delay in publication, not in order to withhold it until after parliament had risen. Grey, I, 160-161.

[b] *B. D.*, IV, no. 523, p. 584.

[c] *Ibid.*, no. 521, p. 581.

September when the newspaper *Ryech* appeared with a substantially accurate summary. No harm resulted because the ratifications of the convention were exchanged in St. Petersburg on the 23rd, and publication followed on the 26th.[d] The convention was thus loosed upon a suspecting public.

Diplomatic courtesy required, or made desirable, that prior, confidential notification be given to some great powers, and to a few others upon whom the news should be broken gently. Izvolsky suggested before leaving for his vacation that Great Britain and Russia should jointly address an explanatory, reassuring communication to the Persian government, besides making some notification of the Tibetan arrangement to China. For the rest, he proposed that each contracting party should be at liberty to offer confidential announcements to those whom it should select. It was not a Russian custom to offer such information to the Porte, but it was desired to give a general idea of the convention to France.[e] The British foreign office was sympathetic to the scheme, and also desired to favor a few nations. It entirely approved making simultaneous communications to Persia and China; insisted on being first with the Amir. It desired particularly to inform France and Japan, although the Japanese ambassador in London practically knew the substance of the convention already from conversations with Grey. These indications should be verbal and strictly confidential, and the powers in general should not be made acquainted with the text until shortly before its publication. Nicolson privately warned Gubastov that "it would be wise to say nothing at Washington as it was most difficult to prevent leakages there."[f] The British foreign office sent a telegram on 5 September directing that verbal explanations be given Japan, and others to France and to the Amir on the following day. Spring Rice and Hartwig presented a joint

[d] *Ibid.*, no. 317, note 1, p. 354; no. 456, note 2, p. 504; no. 536, p. 596. *G. P.*, XXV, part I, no. 8536, pp. 42-43. The German chargé in St. Petersburg reported that the indiscretion in the *Ryech* was committed by a Reuter correspondent, Bryanchaninov, and that it was greatly regretted by the Russian government and by Nicolson.

[e] *B. D.*, IV, no. 519, p. 579; no. 525, p. 586.

[f] *Ibid.*, no. 519, p. 579; no. 525, and enclosure, pp. 586-587.

note dated the 11th to the Persian government, while the two ministers at Peking transmitted the arrangement respecting Tibet on the 25th. The official text of the convention was distributed among the great powers on 24 September.[g]

While these necessary details were being arranged, the chief artificers of the settlement scurried away in quest of rest and pleasures. Izvolsky got away ahead of everybody, going first to Karlsbad. Arrangements were made for him to have the honor of lunching, on 5 September, with King Edward at Marienbad, "where the cure, as usual, agreed wonderfully" with him.[h] Before the luncheon, Izvolsky had a conversation with Sir Edward Goschen, the British ambassador at Vienna who was in attendance upon the king. Izvolsky remarked to Goschen that "he had sometimes been almost in despair" of overcoming the opposition to the convention at home, while it had taken "all the patience at his command to withstand the continual 'hammering' to which he had been subjected from Berlin." He then paid gracious tribute to Nicolson, who had always understood conditions, and he asserted that "a wiser choice of negotiator could not possibly have been made." [i] Izvolsky suspected that his troubles with the convention were not finished. At home he would have to meet violent criticism from the military party, who were "to a man against him," besides from the large number of reactionaries. He was afraid of Germany, because it was becoming active in Persia where it seemed anxious to be on a footing "totally out of proportion" to its real interests. Yet the convention was worth this trouble because, while its terms dealt with distant countries, "to him the chief significance . . . was peace in the Far East, and time for the political and military regeneration of the empire." He hoped that "it would make its effect felt also nearer home." [j] Izvolsky then was kindly received by King Edward at luncheon, while at the conclusion of the private audience afterwards

[g] *Ibid.*, no. 317, note 1, p. 354; Editors' Note, p. 579; no. 529, enclosure, p. 589; no. 536, and note 1, p. 596.
[h] *Ibid.*, no. 523, p. 584.
[i] *Ibid.*, p. 582. Nicolson, p. 233. See also Izvolsky, p. 294.
[j] *B. D.*, IV, no. 523, p. 583; V, no. 379, p. 443.

he was presented with the Grand Cross of the Victorian Order.[k] To a man of Izvolsky's inclinations, his vacation was already a success.

No one received more genuine plaudits for his good work than did Nicolson. Hardinge expressed cordial appreciation of his friendly coöperation, because the realization of an agreement with Russia had been his "dream for the last four years."[l] Morley wrote from Lake Leman that the country owed Nicolson "a great debt." He understood that the carrying out of the convention would encounter trouble in Russia, but he conceded that "I shall have to keep a very vigilant eye in my diocese."[m] Grey likewise assured Nicolson that everything he had done was a success, and wished that he "could be multiplied at will so as to be available at once in every place where there were difficulties."[n] Nicolson himself had already thanked Grey for his kind support, invaluable guidance and advice, as well as for "the considerate manner in which you have always acted towards me."[o] Into this feast of harmony a sour note was later injected from Teheran by Spring Rice. He sent his congratulations to Grey upon the signature along with hopes for the enjoyment of a well deserved rest. He then ventured to set forth his views again, until his letter read like his official despatches. He warned Grey that his difficulties were only beginning in Persia, because Great Britain had bartered its prestige to become an accomplice of Russia for a consideration.[p]

The reaction to the news of an Anglo-Russian convention by certain governments was eagerly awaited. The French gov-

[k] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 584. Shortly afterwards, in a letter to Nicolson, the king wrote: "I was much pleased with my conversation with M. Izvolsky at Marienbad . . . and to renew my acquaintance with him. He is undoubtedly a very able man and I believe honest and straightforward." *Ibid.*, no. 535, p. 596.

[l] *Ibid.*, no. 520, p. 580.

[m] *Ibid.*, no. 526, p. 587. Nicolson, p. 256.

[n] *B. D.*, IV, no. 537, p. 596. Nicolson, p. 255. King Edward wrote that Nicolson's skill had resulted in "a great triumph for British diplomacy" and placed him "in the front rank of our diplomatists." (*B. D.*, IV, no. 520, p. 580; no. 535, pp. 595-596.) The tsar expressed his pleasure to Nicolson, and "looked forward also to the establishment of thoroughly friendly feelings." *Ibid.*, no. 545, pp. 606-607.

[o] *Ibid.*, no. 288, p. 304.

[p] *Ibid.*, no. 532, pp. 593-594.

ernment, ally of Russia, friend of Great Britain, interested and encouraging onlooker throughout the period of the negotiations, gave little public display of its pleasure. When Clemenceau, then premier, was shown a summary of the terms, he thought it was "very satisfactory," because the settlement of these Asiatic questions cleared the ground for coming discussions on the Bagdad railway, along with the important question of the Persian Gulf. Cambon, the French ambassador in London, assured Grey that Great Britain "had got much the best of the agreement." [q] The Austro-Hungarian government showed no great concern for the details of the agreement, because its attention was fully absorbed by internal problems, and by the negotiations with Hungary on imperial questions. Both Izvolsky and Goschen had agreed that the general impression was favorable, particularly at the removal of causes of friction in many parts of the world, along with the additional guarantee for the preservation of the general peace. It seemed desirable to keep relations between Austria and Russia calm by avoiding subjects upon which they did not agree.[r]

Great Britain and Russia were especially solicitous that the Persian government should justly appreciate the benefits which would accrue to it from the provisions of the arrangement. A note was drawn up for joint communication which summarized the friendly solution achieved for the purpose of avoiding conflicts of interest or future misunderstandings, in order not to "place the Persian government in an embarrassing situation in any respect whatever." The two governments emphasized that they "have not for a moment lost sight of the fundamental principle of absolute respect of the integrity and independence of Persia," and left it to that government to "convince itself that the agreement . . . can but contribute in the most efficacious manner to the security, the prosperity, and the internal devel-

[q] *Ibid.*, no. 527, p. 587; no. 537, p. 596. The French press was chary in its comments upon the convention, the details of which it discussed casually. Nevertheless there was no doubt of the appreciation of the agreement which had brought its ally and its friend together. A. Maurice Low, "Russia and England Agree," *Forum* (New York), XXXIX (1908), 340. See also *Paul Cambon*, p. 241; Bompard, p. 278.

[r] *B. D.*, IV, no. 541, p. 601; no. 548, pp. 611-612.

opment of Persia."[s] With only minor alterations Spring Rice and Hartwig presented this explanatory memorandum to the foreign minister under date of 11 September, but it came too late to act as a cure for Persian suspicions.[t] It can hardly be said that Spring Rice was a happy choice for his post, for he was completely out of sympathy with the policy of a Persian agreement with Russia, nor was he in good health.[u] The British foreign office had failed to give him timely warning of the signature of the convention, with the result that for three days he denied the existence of any agreement after the papers had published the news, and then he said that "in any case there could be no question of a division of Persia, or of intervention."[v] The formal notification reached him on 4 September, but the Persian government had already analyzed the rumored agreement. The comments which Spring Rice heard were hostile, especially to Great Britain, "who was regarded as having sold Persia to Russia and as having betrayed the cause of Persian independence." Because of the internal disorders and the impotence of the government, Spring Rice concluded that energetic measures were needed to curb the growing excitement.[w]

A veritable campaign was put on by the British to make the arrangement palatable to the Persians. On 4 September, on his own initiative, Spring Rice sent an explanatory letter to the minister for foreign affairs in which the assurances already given by Russia and Great Britain were renewed. He took measures to make this statement publicly known.[x] He called upon "a gentleman connected with the political societies" to convince him of the purity of British motives, and the inno-

[s] *Ibid.*, no. 521, enclosure, p. 581. See also no. 518, p. 578; no. 524, pp. 584-585; no. 525, enclosure, p. 586.

[t] *Ibid.*, no. 529, and enclosure, pp. 588-590.

[u] *Ibid.*, no. 532, pp. 593-594. Sykes, II, 414. The foreign office intended to have Spring Rice come home for medical care. Gwynn, II, 103.

[v] *B. D.*, IV, no. 530, p. 590. Shuster, p. xxiv. Spring Rice called attention to this failure to inform him with typical asperity. To Sir Valentine Chirol he wrote: "They have thrown a stone into the windows here, and left me to face the policeman. . . . This was, I suppose, a sign that Persian public opinion was not to be considered." Gwynn, II, 103.

[w] *B. D.*, IV, no. 530, p. 591.

[x] *Ibid.*, p. 590; Editors' Note, p. 590.

cence of the Persian arrangement. He dilated upon the provisions that promised respect for the independence and integrity of Persia, besides the principle of the open door for commerce:

I pointed out that the agreement was but one of many, all couched in similar terms, and all aiming at the maintenance of the *status quo* in Asia, and the final conclusion of the policy of aggression which had so long been pursued by the European nations, with such deplorable results both to themselves and to the Asiatic peoples.[y]

Nicolson himself passed off the most disingenuous description upon the Mushir ul Mulk, Persian minister in St. Petersburg, who called on the 24th to inquire for the terms of the agreement:

He would see [Nicolson believed] that the arrangement was eminently favorable to Persia, and how baseless were the reports that Russia and Great Britain had contemplated a partition of Persia. The two powers had merely agreed not to annoy each other in certain regions, and the rights and prerogatives of the Persian government were fully recognized and remained unaffected and undisturbed. It was not correct to speak of "spheres of influence," as by that expression it might appear as if the two powers wished to restrict the liberty of action of the Persian government in certain regions, and to exercise influence therein themselves. Nothing of this was meant by the arrangement; . . . To this surely the Persian government could not object, and indeed they should be gratified at the restraint which each power had imposed upon itself, and above all on their having solemnly recognized the integrity and the independence of Persia.[z]

The Mushir ul Mulk also dissembled when he said that "the arrangement appeared to him thoroughly satisfactory," but Nicolson believed himself "well aware that Persians are adepts in concealing their real sentiments." Even in diplomacy Nicolson had used most deceitful language, yet Grey agreed that his words had been "most judicious and right and should be entirely approved." [a]

[y] *Ibid.*, no. 530, p. 591.
[z] *Ibid.*, no. 538, p. 598.
[a] *Ibid.*, no. 538, and minute, pp. 598-599. The Persian chargé told his German colleague: "Other states may regard the new Anglo-Russian policy as practical and necessary, but Persia stands only to lose by it; it will pay the costs." *G. P.*, XXV, part I, no. 8535, p. 42.

The Persians, however, turned out to be "other semi-civilized Orientals . . . singularly difficult to convince." The country was again in political turmoil, and the popular leaders, already imbued with a deep distrust of Russia, found what confidence they had hitherto had in the sympathy of a liberal England rudely undermined. It was quickly perceived that "England had definitely withdrawn her opposition to Russian aggression in return for a share of the spoil." Because Persia appeared to have no means of resistence, the future seemed hopeless.[b] Spring Rice had often warned his government that an agreement with Russia would be considered a betrayal of Persia, in consequence of which British prestige would tumble. All through September 1907 Spring Rice was busy writing despatches to show that what he had predicted had come true. Other sources bore out his charges.[c] The violent attitude of the Persian politicians and press was directed largely against Great Britain, while Russia was seldom mentioned. Great Britain fell from grace; but Russia for many years had been accorded no grace. Great Britain was no longer looked upon as a protector, and a strong feeling of indignation was rising against it in Persia, "far stronger in fact than against Russia, who is not accused of disguising her policy or of ever having pretended to friendship for the Persian people, or a desire for Persian prosperity and independence." [d] Spring Rice did what he could to explain the British views and preserve British prestige. From many persons he learned that opposition to the arrangement in Persia would be lessened, if Great Britain and Russia would join with Persia in inviting other powers to adhere to the clause respecting the independence and integrity of the country. Such action would prove that the clause was not a mere blind, but would be regarded as a "pledge of good

[b] *B. D.*, IV, no. 530, p. 591.

[c] Sykes, II, 414. Shuster, p. xxiv. A letter addressed to Professor Browne, author of *The Persian Revolution*, was read in the house of commons on 17 February 1908. It said in part: "The action of England has alienated from her the good opinion and sympathy of all Persians. . . . Its immediate effect in Persia is, however, the complete destruction of the friendship which the Persians have entertained for the English." *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, CLXXXIV, 548.

[d] *B. D.*, IV, no. 531, pp. 592-593; no. 532, p. 594.

faith and proof that we mean [the] principles in question to be part of public law and not subject to the will of two powers." Hartwig was also supposed to be in favor of this proposal.[e] Of course the British government would have nothing to do with this suggestion, not only because it would give an excuse to other powers, Germany first of all, to meddle in Persian affairs, but also on the higher ground that a request from Persia for the endorsements of others was "neither courteous nor necessary," it being "a slur on our good faith." The Russian government thought likewise.[f] It was all Persia could do to survive the internal incidents of the following years, but with the outbreak of the world war Persian hostility to both tormentors, especially towards Great Britain, was perfectly clear and understandable.[g]

Above all else the attitude of Germany was watched. No attempt had ever been made to conceal the fact of the negotiations from the German government. British diplomats, but especially Izvolsky, endeavored to lull German suspicions with frequent assurances that any Anglo-Russian agreement would scrupulously respect all German interests, and that no question in which Germany was involved would be settled without its proper participation. Those promises, it is only just to indicate, were perfectly kept. Although neither contracting party disclosed any details, from many sources, particularly from London, the German foreign office received quite exact knowledge of the probable terms of the agreement. It would consist of several "protocoles de désintéressement," but there would be absolutely no political alliance.[h] In the first of three model reports sent during September by the chargé d'affaires von Miquel from St. Petersburg, he shrewdly summarized how most of the driving force for the reconciliation came from the British. Russia had hung back, and to a degree had been compelled to go along because of its

[e] *Ibid.*, no. 528, p. 588; no. 529, p. 589; no. 530, p. 592. The Russian foreign office "had heard nothing from Monsieur de Hartwig on the subject." *Ibid.*, no. 534, p. 595.

[f] *Ibid.*, no. 533, p. 594; no. 534, and enclosure, p. 595.

[g] Gwynn, II, 103. Sykes, II, 414.

[h] *G. P.*, XXV, part I, no. 8532, pp. 36-37; no. 8533, pp. 37-40.

weakness. Miquel suspected that the greater British interest in the negotiations betokened a desire for more freedom of action in its entire foreign policy, but that the settlement would hardly be transformed into an entente cordiale.[i] His despatch of the 25th contained a summary of the convention with his first comments. Where the treaty concerned Asia, contrary to earlier rumors, very few innovations existed, while the establishment of the lines for British and Russian interests in Persia was alone of fundamental importance. What impressed him most was that "the meaning of the Anglo-Russian agreement lay not so much in Asia, but much more in Europe, where its consequences could be made noticeable for a long time." It would be British influence that would rise in Europe; what Russia won was time for reorganization, undisturbed by any other power.[j]

After two days' further reflection, Miquel completed his analysis of the convention. He believed that the negotiations had been so skilfully conducted that no nation, including his own, could take offence at any of the provisions. Yet Germany was the nation most affected by the agreement, which some quarters believed Great Britain had made, less because of danger in Asia, but rather because of "the growth of a threatening power in Europe." No one could reproach Great Britain for its policy, and could only marvel at its success. The full realization of the result, Miquel described with poignant regret:

> As cleverly as the wording of the treaty may be composed, the impression is unescapable that the powers have set up a syndicate with which we shall have to reckon. This compulsion towards close association is a compliment, even if a troublesome one, to the German army, the German navy, our commerce, and the talent of the German people in particular for development.[k]

In the face of all the assurances of the peaceful nature of the agreement, which Bülow already in April 1907 had pub-

[i] *Ibid.*, no. 8535, pp. 41-42; no. 8537, pp. 45-46.
[j] *Ibid.*, no. 8536, pp. 43-45. The kaiser entirely agreed, and believed that Great Britain "will become still more unpleasant to us in Europe than before." *Ibid.*, marginal notes 5 and 6, p. 45.
[k] *Ibid.*, no. 8537, pp. 46-47.

licly declared was awaited without disquietude, the immediate reaction of the German government had to be moderate or non-committal.[l] As soon as word of the signature was known, Bülow prepared, on 1 September, his recommendation for the attitude of the press. If the convention corresponded to the earlier indications, as he anticipated it would, he admonished that "it is essential that the agreement shall be reviewed quietly and factually." [m] Therefore it was possible to say, two weeks after the text had become public property, that "the attitude of the Imperial government . . . is perfectly correct in tone;" but there were other ways of determining that the reception of the convention by Germany was "not very favorable." [n] The German press derived vicarious delight from the spotty reception accorded by Russian, English and French newspapers to the convention, and instituted a campaign to assure its readers, by means of selected quotations, that public opinion in those countries did not think well of the business.[o]

Something of course must be mentioned of the manner in which public opinion took up with this latest novelty. Public opinion in England was a many-faceted phenomenon, not the unity implied by the expression, while to speak of a public opinion in Russia, even by 1907, is premature. Throughout the negotiations the public of neither country was kept abreast of their course, while the rumors and misinformation that did appear were always deplored. That is not to say that either side was indifferent to making the terms of the convention as pleasing as possible to the most powerful, critical element in public opinion. From time to time Nicolson buttressed some demand with the additional plea of the good effect its acceptance would have upon British public opinion, but Izvolsky would not be moved by this consideration. Less often he referred to it on his own account, but he more frequently, and accurately, alluded to the attitude of this powerful group in

[l] *Ibid.*, no. 8531, footnote **, p. 35. *B. D.*, IV, no. 269, p. 291.
[m] *G. P.*, XXV, part I, no. 8534, Bülow's marginal note, p. 40.
[n] *B. D.*, IV, no. 540, minute, p. 600; no. 542, pp. 601-602. Izvolsky, *Correspondance diplomatique*, I, 231.
[o] *B. D.*, IV, no. 542, p. 602.

the government, or of that influential section at the court. The British Liberal ministers themselves never worried unduly on the score of public opinion, because they felt confident that they had a sufficient number of followers in their parliamentary majority to approve anything within reason that they should present. The estimation held of the public print was sufficiently revealed by Hardinge's words to Tschirschky on the occasion of the king's visit to the kaiser at Cronberg on 16 August 1906: "Considering that the bulk of the press in England was more or less associated with the views of the opposition it would be absurd to attach undue importance to its opinions." [p] Izvolsky's extreme sensitiveness to criticism by the press may have affected his vanity, but seldom his policy. The "serious hitch" immediately before the conclusion of the convention came from the unfriendly groups in the government, not from public opinion in Russia. This much may be said with perfect confidence: not one provision contained in the convention of 1907 found its way in primarily because public opinion would have insisted upon it; not one provision was kept out of the convention simply because public opinion would not have stomached it.

The newspaper and periodical press did, indeed, generously notice the appearance of the convention. Its terms were summarized with more or less accuracy, and commented upon too often without proper appreciation. Because of this, as well as because of the little influence wielded, to devote much detail to the printed reception would be of small value. In Russia, Izvolsky was prepared for "an avalanche of criticism" from the military and the reactionary minded. He would receive every support from the liberal party in Russia to which "he belonged in spirit," but it was clearly neither powerful nor very influential.[q] After the convention did appear, the "tone" of the press turned out to be "a most agreeable surprize," with the articles in the papers he had feared most not going beyond the limits "of legitimate criticism." This

[p] *Ibid.*, III, no. 425, p. 367; IV, no. 258, p. 281; no. 429, minutes, p. 481.
[q] *Ibid.*, no. 523, p. 583.

was true in part because, as Izvolsky slyly added, "of course I had prepared the way a little." [r] Press views varied all the way from the recognition by the *Novoye Vremya* that "Russia lost every possibility of threatening India" to the fanciful statement in the *Slovo* that the treaty would "secure Russia from any danger she may have feared from the ambition of Germany." [s] The improvement in the comments of the Russian press after the publication of the convention went beyond what "could ever have been expected in so short a time," which was directly attributable to the friendly way Great Britain and Russia coöperated in the Persian internal crisis during the final months of 1907.[t] Some individuals whose opinions carried weight, opposed the arrangement at the time and afterwards. From Paris, Prince Kochubey, "a bitter Anglophobe," accused Izvolsky of pursuing a timid policy, because of little confidence in the military power of Russia, as well as out of servility to a tsar "imbued with Anglophile sentiments." The signature of the convention "endorsed the renunciation of Russia's natural ambitions in Asia." [u] Muravyev, the Russian ambassador in Rome, found the division of Persia into spheres contrary to Russian traditional policy, highly unprofitable for Russia, and completely useless.[v] Count Witte, always ready to disparage anything not his own work, ponderously characterized the convention as a change in policy from a flirtation with Germany to a flirtation with Great Britain. His final judgment was that the convention by itself was of no especial importance: its significance would grow out of future relationships, as Russia was the ally and Great Britain the friend of France.[w] Later day communist opinion has looked upon the convention of 1907 and also found it wanting, less because it was a piece of hateful, nationalistic imperialism, but more because it "tied Russia hand and foot, giving it nothing in

[r] *Ibid.*, no. 541, p. 601; no. 546, p. 608.
[s] See London *Times*, 17 March 1908, p. 15. Low, *Forum*, XXXIX, 340.
[t] *B. D.*, IV, no. 464, p. 510; no. 547, p. 609.
[u] *Ibid.*, no. 542, p. 602.
[v] Wroblewski, *Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1224-1225.
[w] Witte, *Vospominaniya*, II, 405-406; see English edition, p. 432. See also Onslow, *Slavonic Review*, VII, 549.

return," neither in the struggle with Germany, nor for the strengthening of its influence in Persia or in central Asia.[x]

The public greeting given the convention in England was not wholly cordial. Izvolsky noticed that despite "one or two discordant notes," the disposition of the press had been generally favorable.[y] In his own final judgment Grey was quite satisfied, although compelled to concede, even while not agreeing, that "people here do not think that the convention, as an isolated bargain, is a good one; but they will be pleased if it leads to a generally friendly attitude of Russia towards us."[z] The convention was criticized by the conservatives, among whom Curzon was prominent, and by the more radically minded who disapproved of the callous indifference shown to Persia and fumed at the implied condonation of tsarism by the signature of any agreement with Russia.[a] The important *Manchester Guardian* damned with faint praise:

> The Anglo-Russian convention seems to us to merit neither strong praise nor strong blame. Things in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet were drifting in certain directions. The convention in each case takes note of the drift, formalizes it, and, as it were, legalizes it. Such agreements are often worth making, but they seldom give sufficient cause for having the bells rung, or for tearing out hair either, and so it is with this one.[b]

The periodicals were filled with their share of special articles, among which a good one was a rarity. The judgment pronounced on the convention by the political writer Calchas for the *Fortnightly Review* was eminently fair. He appreciated that the guarantee of the safety of the British dominion in India was a result that "would have beggared the most vivid imagination of a few years ago;" that the partition of Persia had been effected for all practical purposes, and that the tsar was very nearly the suzerain of the shah.[c] The famous *Specta-*

[x] Rouire, Introduction by F. Rothstein, (Russian edition), p. 5. See also Reisner, *Krasny Arkhiv*, X, 57-66.

[y] *B. D.*, IV, no. 544, p. 604.

[z] *Ibid.*, no. 550, p. 616. Grey, I, 155.

[a] Lee, II, 572. Onslow, *Slavonic Review*, VII, 549. "The Anglo-Russian Convention," *Spectator*, XCIX (1907), 420.

[b] Low, *Forum*, XXXIX, 340.

[c] Calchas, "The Anglo-Russian Agreement," *Fortnightly Review*, LXXXVIII (1907), 546-548. The writer in the *Spectator* said of Persia: "Of course, it is

tor floundered badly in its belief that the Anglo-Russian convention dealt with Asia alone:

> If it has any effect upon the equilibrium of Europe, it will be an effect wholly unpremeditated. Such results, of course, are conceivable; . . . but, on the whole, we do not think that the convention will have any directly recognizable influence upon what we call the balance of power in Europe.[d]

The Viennese newspapers passed favorable notice upon the signature of the convention as an event of great political significance, calculated to furnish additional security for the general peace. Its terms did not particularly interest the press which made few references to them, but this "remarkable reticence" seemed properly ascribable, as in the case of the government, to the absorbing interest taken in the internal politics of the empire.[e] From Budapest there came an article from the pen of Professor Arminius Vambéry. The result of the negotiations, which had been conducted in a "huckstering spirit," gave him no delight. He was certain that Russia would become mightier and more daring in its policies, penetrating further into southern Persia, where the outlet into warm waters still beckoned. It would be a long day before "the whale and the elephant will walk in brotherly love and affection over Asia." The convention was a mistake for Great Britain because its interests were harmed, so that "in the form it came out, it would have been much better not to come out at all." [f]

The guidance and direction that the German press had

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sad that Persia should decline. . . . She was already mortgaged and controlled. . . . All that has happened now is that the doctors have told her the truth." *Spectator*, XCIX, 420.

[d] *Ibid.* See also *Living Age*, CCLV (1907), 315-316. The anonymous writer of an ill-tempered contribution to *Blackwood's Magazine* expressed his belief that "there is not the smallest foundation for the supposition that the cause of permanent peace has gained one iota by the arrangement." "Britain and Russia in the Middle East," *Blackwood's Magazine*, CLXXXIII (1908), 153.

[e] *B. D.*, IV, no. 522, p. 582; no. 541, p. 601.

[f] A. Vambéry, "The Anglo-Russian Convention," *Nineteenth Century and After*, LXII (1907), 895-896, 903. Curzon found the dismal views of this article much to his liking, subsequently declaiming similar thoughts, and using the expression "huckstering spirit" in the debate in the house of lords without reference to Vambéry, or his article. For this unacknowledged borrowing he was twitted and embarrassed in the course of the debate.

received was quite faithfully observed. Izvolsky had been uneasy over the possible German reaction, but was neither surprized nor irritated when the newspapers spoke about the agreement, with a few hostile exceptions, in "bitter-sweet language." [g] Sir Frank Lascelles reported from Berlin that the document had "on the whole been very favorably received," yet he gave such press summaries that at the end Hardinge and Grey perceived that the opposite was more nearly true. Lascelles did point out that most of the press found satisfaction in so far as the terms had cut across no German interests. The papers also plainly saw that all of the existing causes of friction between Russia and Great Britain in central Asia had been settled. More especially in the organs of the commercial world, the dissatisfaction was less successfully hidden. Some chagrin was exhibited because two powers had composed their differences without the participation, and possibly at the expense, of Germany. What happened in Afghanistan or Tibet was of no concern, but if Persia had actually been divided into commercial spheres, then German legitimate trade expansion would be menaced. In that event Germany could probably do nothing for a time, and such a solution would hardly promote the peace of the world, which was persistently proclaimed to be the aim of British policy.[h] In one of the best periodical articles to appear in any country, Professor Hans Delbrück succinctly declared:

For the time being it is again England which in its convention with Russia concerning relations in Asia can point anew to a brilliant success. . . . What the English have conceded are truly trifles, what they have won is for them of the very highest worth, so far as treaties in general mean anything. . . . How could Russia enter into such a treaty? Merely on account of foreign relations it is, indeed, hardly to be ex-

[g] *B. D.*, IV, no. 523, p. 583; no. 541, p. 601. Izvolsky told Nicolson that the German reception "had been far better than he had anticipated." He was not deluded by that, for he continued: "It is however, impossible to deny that the convention is by no means welcome to Germany and we must both expect to see her cause us trouble . . . not only in Persia . . . but everywhere." *Ibid.*, no. 546, p. 608.

[h] *Ibid.*, no. 540, pp. 599-600. The British minister at Munich, Mr. Fairfax Cartwright, was more positive in his conclusion that "the Anglo-Russian agreement does not meet with the approval of the leaders of German public opinion." *Ibid.*, no. 542, pp. 601-602.

plained. Perhaps the key is to be sought in the financial policy of Russia . . . and persons in St. Petersburg hope, by means of the most extreme concessions, to tie themselves up with the English market.[i]

The publication of the convention came shortly after parliament had risen, which left plenty of time to prepare replies to whatever criticism could be anticipated during the debates on its acceptance.[j] The opposition won a resounding addition in the return of Lord Curzon to public life for the occasion. Since his resignation from the viceroyalty of India after his unsuccessful quarrel with Kitchener, he had been out of favor with both political parties. Even with Lansdowne's effective assistance, Curzon barely defeated his opponent in an election in order to be returned to the house of lords as a representative Irish peer.[k] Curzon could be counted upon for wordy opposition to the agreement with Russia. Already on 25 September, a day before the public release of the text, his disillusionment was total. He wrote to a kindred spirit, Earl Percy, whom Nicolson had described as "an effective critic," to reveal his distress at the understanding:

> The Russian convention is in my view deplorable. It gives up all that we have been fighting for for years, and it gives it up with a wholesale abandon that is truly cynical in its recklessness. Ah, me, it makes one despair of public life. The efforts of a century sacrificed and nothing or next to nothing in return. When parliament meets there ought to be, but I suppose will not be, a demonstration in force.[l]

After parliament reassembled the question was discussed, but in the debates of the lords it was treated as something "outside the sphere of party politics," while in the house of commons, instead of being greeted by a demonstration in force, only "a thin house" turned out.[m] The house of lords took up the subject first on 6 February 1908, at which time Curzon

[i] D[elbrück], *Preussische Jahrbücher*, CXXX (1907), 197. Dillon thought, in his own article, that Russia entered into the agreement more because of a "yearning" for "peace, order and happiness." For one of Dillon's capabilities and sources of information his contribution is disappointingly lean. E. J. Dillon, "The Anglo-Russian Agreement and Germany," *Contemporary Review*, XCII (1907), 700.

[j] Grey, I, 160-161. *B. D.*, IV, no. 549, pp. 612-616.

[k] Newton, p. 365.

[l] Ronaldshay, III, 38. Nicolson, p. 251.

[m] London *Times*, 18 February 1908, p. 9.

sallied forth on his maiden speech. This was a "shrill denunciation" in which he waylaid the noble lords for an hour and a quarter with "the condensed result of the studies and travels of more than twenty years," all of which was by then, his biographer mourns, "of purely academic interest." [n]

The Anglo-Russian convention of 1907, Curzon vouchsafed to those who heard him, sacrificed everything and was occasionally humiliating: "the conception was right, but its execution was faulty." He could find nothing good to say about it. In Persia the convention surrendered everything of value to Russia. Not enough attention, said he, had been given to the lines demarcating the spheres: the Russian region was abnormally large, the British zone too small and poor. "There is no gap whatever between them except such as was created by the great sand deserts which stretch across the heart of Persia." Nothing was gained in Afghanistan, not even the Amir's consent. The Tibetan clauses were an "absolute surrender," while to consult with Russia about the evacuation of the Chumbi valley was degrading.[o] He quoted from a speech delivered by Grey at Berwick during the recess, wherein the foreign secretary had claimed that "we have safeguarded the Indian frontier without foregoing commercial prospects in any part of Persia where we had any," in order to impute great ignorance to the speaker.[p]

In his presentation of the government's case the undersecretary for foreign affairs, Lord Fitzmaurice, replied *seriatim* to Curzon's criticisms; accused him of cavilling; of spending "a great deal of learning and verbal refinement" upon insignificant points; and drew the distinction that he thought he was "engaged in answering, not the front bench opposite, but the noble lord himself." [q] He defended the zone conceded to Russia in Persia as bounded by "a line which recognizes existing facts, and not a line which creates any particular right

[n] *C. H. B. F. P.*, III, 362. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, CLXXXIII, 1023. Ronaldshay, III, 44.
[o] *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, CLXXXIII, 999-1024.
[p] *Ibid.*, p. 1007.
[q] *Ibid.*, pp. 1035, 1037, 1039.

or disability which does not at present prevail." Furthermore, it was a pleasure to disclose that the Imperial Bank of Persia had informed the foreign office of its approval of the treaty.[r] The accusation of losses sustained by the British in Tibet, Fitzmaurice met by reminding Curzon that the records enabled him to detect "a certain note of difference between the view of Tibet taken by the noble lord and that taken by his colleagues" in the incidents of a few years ago. Neither was it "the desire of the British government in India, any more than it was that of Russia, to take up an adventurous policy in Tibet."[s] After Lord Lamington had followed with a few ineffectual remarks, considering the lateness of the hour, (it was seven-forty in the evening), the remainder of the debate was put over until the following Monday, 10 February.[t]

At the appointed time that knowing veteran, Lord Sanderson, resumed with a weighty defence of the convention. He dwelt on the positive and permanent engagements respecting Persia and Afghanistan obtained from Russia in place of the hitherto "rather fluid assurances" given only in correspondence or conversations. He showed how the Russian government had freely supported its position by treasury aid, while the British government balked at incurring pecuniary liability, without which little could be done. The Persian Gulf was properly omitted from the convention:

> The special interests of Great Britain in the Gulf are matters of fact, but they are not very easy to define, the less so because they seem to me to be always expanding, and definition might be found to operate by way of limitation.[u]

Lord Reay soon followed with another uncommonly good defence. He was convinced that trade relations with Persia were secure, while the respective British and Russian spheres simply accorded with the existing facts.[v] He saw nothing

[r] *Ibid.*, pp. 1032, 1035.
[s] *Ibid.*, pp. 1039, 1042.
[t] *Ibid.*, pp. 1043-1047.
[u] *Ibid.*, pp. 1307, 1309.
[v] "There is no concession made and no advantage gained which is not already, to a certain extent, at all events, possessed by Russia, and the line of demarcation of our sphere gives us what is most essential to our interests." *Ibid.*, p. 1318.

alarming about the local settlement of border disputes between Russia and Afghanistan; nor was there anything undignified in the evacuation of the Chumbi valley. That action reaffirmed an earlier pledge, and the conditions which had been imposed had been fulfilled.[w] Moreover, Lord Reay called attention to the wider benefits that could result from the reconciliation:

> There is no doubt that the tension which existed in our relations with Russia in regard to Asia had a reflex action of a most detrimental character on international relations in Europe. I think, therefore, that we have every reason to approve of this treaty which initiates a new era in the conduct of our foreign relations, not only in Asia, but also elsewhere.[x]

The convention of 1907 corresponded so well with the objects which Lansdowne had striven for in approaching Russia between 1903 and 1905 that it was difficult for him to find anything seriously to complain about. As a matter of fact his remarks were so reasonable that Grey called them "a summing up in favor of the convention."[y] A few objections, mostly for form's sake, he raised but did not answer. He was utterly wrong, however, when he asked his hearers not to forget that "it was Russia that sought this agreement, for until lately we know that she kept us at arm's length."[z]

The debate had proceeded with lordly placidity until near its close, but some animation came while the Earl of Crewe, Lord President of the Council, summed up for the government. He defended the convention with vigor, reminding Lansdowne that Russian trade was becoming supreme in the neutral zone where it likely could not be stopped, while even

[w] *Ibid.*, pp. 1320-1323. In the house of commons, on 17 February 1908, Morley likewise declared that this was true. (*Ibid.*, CLXXXIV, 560.) It is probable that the defenders of the convention were here in error. "The trade-marts were not effectively opened — our agent reported, indeed, that they were effectively closed — but . . . the Chumbi valley . . . was evacuated." (Younghusband, p. 433.) There was no increase of trade with Tibet. Fraser, p. 146.

[x] *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, CLXXXIII, 1323.

[y] *B. D.*, IV, no. 550, p. 616.

[z] *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, CLXXXIII, 1334. Lansdowne feared, for instance, that Russian competition in the neutral zone would be disadvantageous to Great Britain. Doubtless it would be, but the opportunity was equal. Then, in return for equal commercial treatment in Afghanistan for Russia, there was no corresponding provision in favor of Great Britain in the Asiatic regions of Russian predominance. Yet there was no British rivalry at all in Bukhara, Turkestan, or Transcaspia. *Ibid.*, pp. 1326, 1331.

in the south of Persia, Russia exercised some influence. Oftentimes Crewe took especial pains to refute remarks made earlier by Curzon. In Persia the latter had "somewhat underrated" Russian influence, which led him to go "beyond what was justified by the facts of the case." Much was now different than it had been "when he was travelling in those parts of the world." It was impossible to delimit a smaller sphere for Russia, the line for which did include Yezd, "over which the noble lord shed a tear." [a] During the entire debate no other speaker had come to Curzon's aid in sharing his sourest notes. Curzon grew nettled, and interrupted Crewe, between whom there ensued some jockeying.[b] By the time Curzon made his closing speech his attitude was short and snapping. Once again he called upon his intimate travel acquaintance with the old Persia to sustain his convictions, and he deplored the whole bargain. In his haughtiest manner he finally found it unnecessary to say anything more, because no substantial remarks had been offered against the criticisms he had propounded! [c] Even so, the lords did not throw out the convention, but the debates upon it had "served to signalize Lord Curzon's return to public life." [d]

The house of commons got around to its consideration of the convention a week later, and accepted it after one lengthy debate on 17 February 1908. Here the opening attack came from Curzon's correspondent, Earl Percy, whose opposition to an agreement with Russia which, he declared, never kept a treaty, had been known to the foreign office since May 1907.[e] Like Curzon, his remarks were bitterly critical, but more general in their substance, and professed to see nothing in the

[a] *Ibid.*, pp. 1336-1338, 1339.
[b] *Ibid.*, pp. 1338-1339.
[c] *Ibid.*, pp. 1344-1353. During the debates Curzon had passed off some quotations on the Persian settlement, which had appeared in the *Novoye Vremya* of 13/26 September 1907, as "impartial" and from a "safe source of information." His informant had been Mr. Lucien Wolf, who had culled the quotations from bad translations in the pro-German *St. Petersburger Zeitung*. A series of letters on this question in the London *Times* was concluded on 17 March 1908 by one from the London correspondent of the *Novoye Vremya* who scathingly denounced this carelessness in British statesmen.
[d] Ronaldshay, III, 44.
[e] *B. D.*, IV, no. 270, p. 292; no. 271, pp. 292-293.

convention upon which to congratulate Great Britain.[f] Nevertheless the two critics had found so much fault that Grey had believed "it was absolutely necessary to put the case for the convention strongly."[g] His own speech was a spirited defence, the high spot on the question in the commons. He explained to the members that in making the agreement with Russia strategical considerations had been paramount. In this respect the inclusion of Seistan within the British sphere was the most important single factor, so the British line had been arranged with that in view.[h] In truth, as was brought out in the debate, this fancy for Seistan was simply a change in fashion. Once upon a time the possession of Quetta was a strategic necessity; then in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the forward march of danger to India was envisaged as coming through Turkestan, while by 1907 the easiest way to attack India was through Seistan. This was secured in the convention of 1907, but whether that fact guaranteed the immunity of India from Russian aggression was questionable. About the sole, sound criticism in the speech by Lord Ronaldshay, then Curzon's echo in the commons, later his voluminous biographer, exposed this doubt. He failed to see

> how we had secured any immunity which we did not possess before. Seistan, if war was ever to come, was as much at the mercy of Russia today as before the treaty was concluded, and that the position of Seistan would ever become a greater menace to us than it was at present was sufficiently doubtful in view of the physical features of the country.[i]

In answer to the constant objections that Russia had been too favorably treated in Persia, Grey found most effective replies in delineating the rapid progress of the Russian advance

[f] *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, CLXXXIV, 469-480.

[g] *B. D.*, IV, no. 550, p. 616.

[h] *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, CLXXXIV, 481-482. On 7 March 1907 Grey had told Benckendorff: "The direct object of a settlement between Russia and ourselves was to secure the Indian frontier; but there was also an indirect object, viz: to be on good terms with Russia, . . ." (*B. D.*, IV, no. 256, p. 279.) Grey believed the security of India was assured by the convention. "There were no more nerves or apprehensions about that." Grey, I, 154, 160.

[i] *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, CLXXXIV, 503. This was privately recognized in the foreign office. Hardinge wrote that if Russia "wished to attack Afghanistan the Russian forces could easily invade the country in traversing our zone long before we could do anything to prevent them, even if any other steps were possible." *B. D.*, IV, Editors' Note, minutes, p. 458.

during the last twenty years, facts which Curzon had forgotten, who had used "sheer rhetoric" when he charged that British diplomacy had thrown away the gains made in the course of a century. Grey admitted that Russian trade in Persia exceeded British, that it was increasingly competing in the south, and was assisted by the government, with the ever present shadow of military force in the background. He passed off the omission of any reference to the Persian Gulf, (something heartily desired during the negotiations), as advantageous because, if the Bagdad railway should finally be built, then the western shore of the Gulf would be the more important, about which Russia had nothing to say at all. He pronounced his firm belief that "in this agreement we have given up nothing that was not gone before. All that we have sacrificed in Persia are some possibilities — exceedingly remote — of trading. In Tibet and Afghanistan we have sacrificed nothing at all." [j]

A long, but hardly inspired debate followed, in which many members from the rank and file of the house, besides more notable figures, chipped in their opinions. Mr. Balfour, as leader of the opposition, was in good form, being skeptical of an arrangement which he thought had conceded too much unnecessarily. Many members, who had at some time in their lives set foot upon Persian soil, emulated Curzon and mentioned their travels, as if to give forceful authority to their words. One witty member, Mr. Ellis Griffith, effectively stopped such ostentation by the remark:

> To have visited the country seemed to him no great qualification for making a relevant speech. . . . Therefore he would not state one way or the other whether he had been there or not. . . . It was more important to have read the convention than to have been to Persia.[k]

Others took especial delight in taunting, at a safe distance, Curzon on some of his vulnerable observations. Sir H. Norman entered heavily into the defence, and roundly declared that he was sure that Grey's stigmatization of Curzon's speech

[j] *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, CLXXXIV, 481-489, 496.
[k] *Ibid.*, p. 523.

as "mere rhetoric" was "a reproof with which every student of foreign affairs would surely concur."[l] Mr. Evelyn Cecil became statistical, and distressed, to discover that Russia got 272,800 square miles "of the best portion of Persia," while Great Britain obtained 141,100 square miles, "including much that was desert," which left all of 217,180 square miles in the neutral zone.[m] Mr. Rees was more philosophical: northern Persia was already "past praying for," while in recent years Russian peaceful penetration into the south had "considerably strengthened" its position.[n] In the commons, even as in the lords, objection was frequently raised against the use of British influence to secure equality of commercial treatment for Russia in Afghanistan. This appeared to be a provision not matched by any corresponding obligation on the part of Russia to secure the same privileges for British trade in those regions of central Asia under Russian domination. Grey clarified this question in his concluding speech shortly before the close of the debate:

> We are engaged to use our influence with the Amir to secure that any facilities given to British traders are to be given to Russian traders. The reciprocal obligation would have been that Russia was to use her influence with the Amir to secure for us that facilities which are given to Russian traders shall be given to British traders. That would be putting them on an equal footing with us. But we look to ourselves with the Amir. It is our business to secure from the Amir any concessions which he gives to Russian trade; it is not Russia's business to secure them for us.[o]

The convention of 1907 was actually mentioned in the Russian imperial duma on the occasion of Izvolsky's first appearance before that body on 27 February / 11 March 1908. He gave a general outline of the purposes of his foreign policy, and referred to the convention as an illustration. He explained his great concern to do all that he could "for the maintenance of the general peace." He advised the duma with great unctuousness of his optimism that he could succeed

[l] *Ibid.*, p. 513.
[m] *Ibid.*, p. 527.
[n] *Ibid.*, p. 533.
[o] *Ibid.*, p. 557.

in his task. His supply of optimism was of a perfectly healthy variety because, as he said amidst applause and shouts of "bravo," it was rooted "in an unshakable belief in the strength, the intelligence and the patriotism of the Russian people." It was this confidence which sustained him, or any other Russian foreign minister, in the difficult problems confronting the nation, and made it possible to achieve results.[p] To aid the cause of peace an agreement had been reached with Japan in the summer of 1907. Likewise with Great Britain, the ally of Japan, an agreement had been signed which had for its subject "several special questions relating to central Asia." It constituted an "indubitable pledge for the maintenance of the general peace and the durability of our new relations with Japan."[q] This was the sum total of Izvolsky's remarks on the convention before the representatives of the Russian people. Professor Paul N. Milyukov, leader of the Constitutional Democratic party, welcomed Izvolsky upon his début, and expressed satisfaction that Russian policy would follow peaceful channels. He did, however, discern a shade of optimism that was none too well-founded. It was a source of contentment to know that conciliatory tendencies were paramount in relations with Japan, with no thought of pursuing a policy of revenge. It was equally pleasant to know that the rapprochement with Great Britain removed at last in an important degree the danger of a collision of interests in Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia.[r] No further remarks on the convention of 1907 figured in the debates of the duma.

Out of this welter of variable opinion, who really did win most profit from the convention? With surprizing unanimity most English, and western European writers have insisted

[p] *Stenograficheskiy otchet: Gosudarstvennaya duma*, third convocation, first session, (1908), pp. 118-119. The duma had no voice in Russian foreign affairs. In illustration of its powerlessness, on 4/17 April 1908, the secretary of the duma read a complaint which charged, *inter alia*, that the ministry of foreign affairs, and foreign policy, remained outside the control of the duma more than anything else; that foreign policy was never submitted in advance, but was carried on behind the scenes; and that it ignored the "interests of the broad, popular masses." *Ibid.*, pp. 1825-1826.

[q] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[r] *Ibid.*, pp. 119-122.

that Russia gained most of the advantage. If this were true, it would require some neat explanation how it was that a nation, in an inferior international position because of the recent, humiliating military defeat by Japan, with a government still distracted by internal unrest and changes in its political structure, had come out on top of a long negotiation in which it had been the passive participant. It would hardly have been tactful for English writers openly to claim a diplomatic triumph; while what little comment was subsequently expressed by Russians had small circulation, besides being in a language seldom understood in the rest of the world. The general unfamiliarity with the subjects settled in the agreement contributed to the difficulty of properly appraising the results, so that later commentators have been content to follow the early lead, and to assume that Russia profitted more than Great Britain. It is, however, fairer to hold that, on the whole, the convention was nearly an equal bargain; but whatever distinct advantages were contained in it came to the credit of Great Britain, the stronger and the consciously active party in the negotiations.

The Tibetan arrangement was harshly judged by the sponsors of the Lhasa expedition, who bemoaned the surrender of its results, which could only permit China to strengthen its former, shadowy suzerainty.[8] Even here, the concessions obtained by Great Britain through the Lhasa agreement of 1904 and the Chinese treaty of 1906, were now formally recognized by Russia. This gave the British a definite economic and commercial advantage, for whatever it was worth. In political affairs both parties agreed to approach Tibet only through the intermediary of the Chinese suzerain power, but what few direct relations were permitted, were excepted in favor of Great Britain. The sole advantage gained by Russia was the permission of personal access to the Dalai Lama, and all the lesser lamas, for the empire's Buddhist subjects. This

[8] *C. H. B. F. P.*, III, 365. *Annual Register*, (1907), 387. Fraser, p. 132. The convention "practically undid all the results of Lord Curzon's mission." (*Round Table*, II, 415.) For a more moderate judgment, poorly expressed, see Perceval Landon, "The Anglo-Russian Agreement: Relative Loss and Gain," *Fortnightly Review*, LXXXVIII (1907), 727.

relationship, however, had been going on for so long that it could not have been prevented, but these pilgrimages were now regularized until they were much less likely to develop political complexions. Russia was saddled with so many disabilities that all its ambitions for conquest in Tibet, if any had actually been contemplated, were effectively circumscribed. Great Britain, on the other hand, had obtained "formal Russian consent to the maintenance of a preferential position . . . in Tibet over all other foreign countries in regard to frontier and commercial matters," along with a general position for imperialistic advances in the future better than any possessed in the past.[t]

If Great Britain had not obtained adequate recognition in the convention of 1907 for its privileged position in Afghanistan, no treaty would have been concluded at all. Nothing was gained that was wholly new. It was of prime importance that Russia was bound by assurances on three points, now given in writing in the form of a definite treaty engagement, hitherto only admitted verbally and not considered binding for all future time. These points included the declarations that Afghanistan was outside the sphere of Russian influence; that all political relations with the Amir would be conducted through Great Britain, which controlled his foreign affairs; and that no Russian agents would be sent into the country. Afghanistan thereby became acknowledged as a British protectorate in fact. No comparable concession in return was granted Russia. The most valuable recompense to Russia came in commercial relations, when Great Britain promised to argue with the Amir in behalf of equal opportunities and facilities for Russian trade in Afghanistan. This could hardly be avoided if Great Britain was to have sole influence with the Amir, and was an obligation willingly assumed in order to keep Russia from attempting to interfere in behalf of a growing trade. The provision that Russian commercial agents in Afghanistan might become necessary was mere window-

[t] *B. D.*, IV, no. 549, pp. 614-616. *C. H. B. F. P.*, III, 365. Witte, *Vospominaniya*, II, 410. "Peace in Asia," *Independent*, LXIII (New York, 1907), 827-828.

dressing, which could be made real only if Great Britain agreed; but Izvolsky had already conceded that this need not be granted, if ever the question were raised. The other possible advantage for Russia came in the permission of direct relations of a non-political character between Russian and Afghan authorities at the frontier. This had been admitted by Lansdowne in his negotiations in 1903. It was also a concession of something that had actually been going on for many years; nor was it worth much to Russia because, by other limitations in the convention, no subjects of major importance could be effectively, or legally, broached. Afghanistan remained a buffer state between territories of the Russian and British empires in Asia, in which Russia could have no diplomatic influence where Great Britain had all that there was, although promising not to use it in any way hostile to Russia.[u]

The Persian clauses of the convention of 1907 were the weightiest, and it is precisely here that later commentators have generously awarded Russia the lion's share. This has been so because the Russian zone was far larger and richer than the British and included the capital city. This is undeniable, but superficial. Russian penetration had thoroughly covered all of Persia contained in the limits of this zone, and had been rapidly expanding into the regions beyond. Russian political influence at Teheran was proverbial, with no other power able to compete successfully against it. The concession of the Russian sphere in northern Persia could not have been avoided, but had it not been delimited Russia might well have won more. It was in this sphere where other nations, more particularly Germany, had lately shown signs of activity, which Russia must face alone, and perhaps have to yield favors.[v]

[u] *B. D.*, IV, no. 549, pp. 613-614. *Annual Register*, (1907), p. 377. Trubetzkoy, p. 103. Witte, *Vospominaniya*, II, 410. Dillon, *Contemporary Review*, XCII, 694.

[v] *Annual Register*, (1907), p. 376. Rouire, pp. 271-272. Wroblewski, *Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1228. Dillon, *Contemporary Review*, XCII, 697. Angus Hamilton, "The Anglo-Russian Agreement: the Question of Persia," *Fortnightly Review*, LXXXVIII (1907), 740. Witte declared that it should have been Russian policy gradually to make northern Persia into a province of the Russian empire. Witte, *Vospominaniya*, II, 407-408.

The British sphere in the south was not the equal in size of the Russian, nor was the British ascendancy within it as supreme. After a century's predominance "British trade and enterprize have so far failed to obtain any permanent results" beyond a few concessions, still guaranteed by the convention. Yet Russia had completely recognized the British position, "and no payment in money has been made for it." [w] The commercial value of the zone was not, in 1907, its main attraction, although it was the region of the known oilfields, the full richness of which only subsequently became apparent. The Russians knew that their trade stood small chance of profitable growth in the region served by the water-borne traffic in the Persian Gulf.[x]

The British sphere in southern Persia had been virtually settled before any other question was touched, and this settlement had been determined by military and strategic details. What was wanted, and won, was to secure that part of Persia from future Russian penetration upon which the military security of India was assumed to depend. The line for the British zone, with its inclusion of southeastern Persia adjacent to Afghanistan and Baluchistan, with the addition of the valuable district of Seistan, conferred the desired military security for India.[y] It had been determined by what the government of India and Lord Kitchener had said was adequate and defensible. Kitchener had expressed the wish that "we should limit our responsibilities to the semi-desert areas of Persian Baluchistan, Kain, Seistan and Kerman," while generally acting "on the supposition that Persia was valueless." Rarely has a wish been so perfectly fulfilled; Persia became a better, and a farther removed barrier for India than Afghanistan ever had been.[z] Whether the military security of India against Russian invasion had been materially improved is doubtful; what was

[w] *B. D.*, IV, no. 549, p. 613.

[x] Wroblewski, *Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1228. Trubetzkoy, p. 101.

[y] Dillon asserts that the British government declined to accept all that the Russian government offered to concede in Persia. He admitted that "that sounds incredible, but it is true." There is no other evidence to suggest that it was true. Dillon, footnote 1, p. 351.

[z] Nicolson, pp. 241-242. *C. H. B. F. P.*, III, 364. Sykes, II, 412. Korff, p. 47. Rouire, pp. 280-281. Popov, *Krasny Arkhiv*, XIX, 63.

important, however, was that Britishers thought so.[a] Precisely in this partition of Persia into spheres where Russia supposedly won the most, it was actually another British gain. Grey himself understood this:

> The gain was equal — on paper. In practice we gave up nothing. We did not want to pursue a forward policy in Persia; nor could a British advance in Persia have been the same menace to Russia that a Russian advance in Persia might be to India. It is no wonder that the Russian foreign minister had some difficulty in getting military authorities in Russia to give up something of real potential value to them, while we gave up what was of little or no practical value to us.[b]

To be confirmed in the possession of something less than was actually controlled, while conceding rather more than the situation warranted, can not be claimed as a large reward for Russia.

In the region of the Persian Gulf, Russia emerged from the negotiations without a shred of advantage. The subsidized line of steamers from Odessa into those waters had never paid their way; Russian trade to southern Persia had only been profitable when it had come overland from the north. The real interest had been for a warm water port as a way of escape the year round from ice-bound coasts, or from exits blocked, because controlled, by other powers. Since 1903 it had been intimated that Russia would require a port on the Gulf, and both Lansdowne and Grey had shown a willingness to consider such a demand sympathetically. It was one of the wonders of the final negotiation that Russia never brought up the subject. A port on the Persian Gulf could have satisfied no Russian need, except vanity. Instead, Russia placidly abandoned the whole of that region into British hands, and allowed Bandar Abbas, which commanded the strait of Ormuz and

[a] Spring Rice knew that "no scheme of defence of which we are capable would be enough to secure [India's] safety. . . . England won't cease to exist if India is lost, and it is certainly not a question of life and death for us." (Gwynn, II, 91-92.) In his speech before the Committee of Imperial Defence on 26 May 1911 Grey declaimed: "With regard to the defence of the Indian frontier, that has been immensely simplified by the Anglo-Russian agreement. . . ." Also: "What a relief that has been for the last four or five years!" The Earl of Crewe amened: "That is quite true." *B. D.*, VI, Appendix V, p. 789.

[b] Grey, I, 154-155.

the entrance to the Gulf itself on the eastern side, to fall within the British sphere.[c] In a separate note Russia admitted British special interests in the Gulf. After Grey had delivered his public declaration, the British hold over the Gulf was technically more secure than ever before. For the rest, the superiority of British naval force would suffice. Yet in return for this surrender, the convention showed no recompense for Russia.

The general view that Russia got the better bargain simply is not true. The French ambassador at London had realized this at once; the British foreign office could list the advantages gained; and Grey summed up everything in a single sentence:

> I do not agree . . . that, even as an isolated bargain, the convention is a bad one, because anyone behind the scenes knows that what we have gained strategically is real, while the apparent sacrifices we have made commercially are not real.[d]

A like opinion was held by Baron Taube, then a legal adviser in the foreign office in St. Petersburg. After Izvolsky handed him the treaty text to read, he exclaimed:

> I can indeed find in this document what you wish to give England, but not what it gives us! You renounce Afghanistan, you renounce the Persian Gulf in the southern zone — which could perhaps someday assure us the outlet to the open sea which we vainly seek in the direction of Constantinople — and you receive nothing in return except the north of Persia, where we already are actually masters.[e]

If Russia got compensation for what it surrendered, it must be sought outside the convention. Izvolsky, for one, thought he had this adequate return because, as he replied to Taube: "I receive the political support of Great Britain in Europe. . . . And who knows whether events will not make it necessary for us to bring the historical problem of the straits question again upon the carpet. . . ."[f] If this represented the offset which

[c] Trubetzkoy, pp. 104-105. Rouire, pp. 269-270. Grey wrote afterwards: "I did not expect her [Russia] to bother about the Persian Gulf, but I thought it probable that at the first opportunity she would talk to us about the Straits in the Near East." Grey, I, 155.

[d] *B. D.*, IV, no. 537, p. 597; no. 549, pp. 612-616; no. 550, p. 616. Grey, I, 155.

[e] Taube, p. 128.

[f] *Ibid.*, p. 128; footnote 2, p. 164.

Izvolsky was delighted to have won, he had not a particle of warrant for his satisfaction,[g] but a year passed before bitter disillusionment made him a wiser man. While the convention was being negotiated the British foreign office had admitted that it was prepared to abandon its longstanding attitude, and would favorably consider proposals for a change in the régime at the straits to the advantage of Russia at some suitable time; but no engagement to do so was ever given. Undoubtedly Izvolsky attached too great an importance to this merely platonic encouragement, which led him rashly headlong in 1908 into the terrible mistakes which curdled his whole career. In London, after the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the independence of Bulgaria had been proclaimed, to save himself from a complete fiasco Izvolsky did raise the question of a new solution for the Straits problem to be accomplished with British assistance.[h] His frantic pleas were "carefully considered" after which Grey gave Izvolsky a memorandum, on 14 October, wherein the British government acknowledged that "the opening of the Straits is fair and reasonable, and in principle they will not oppose it." This was, however, qualified by the observation that "the consent of Turkey would be a necessary preliminary to any proposal," but then "if the proposal made was that the Straits should be open on terms of perfect equality to all, . . . no exception could be taken." [i] Izvolsky accepted the British memorandum, "although it did not give all he had hoped for," and once again nothing definite had been promised him.[j] Miserably

[g] During a conversation in Paris in August 1929 Baron Taube described to the writer how supremely confident Izvolsky had been, in private, that he had obtained such a valuable concession from Great Britain. Sazonov was equally elated in 1915. Taube warned each minister at the time that there was still a long way to go before their optimism was justified.

[h] *B. D.*, V, no. 379, pp. 442-443. For the details of the Bosnia-Herzegovina crisis see Bernadotte E. Schmitt, *The Annexation of Bosnia, 1908-1909*, (Cambridge, 1937).

[i] *B. D.*, V, no. 377, p. 441. Grey, I, 158-159. Nicolson, p. 282. *Livre noir*, II, 458. In a private letter on the following day Grey assured Izvolsky: "At a favorable time I should be ready to support this view at Constantinople; for the moment, however, Turkey, who is beset by sudden troubles, has asked that no pressure should be applied to her to do now reluctantly what she might do willingly later on." *B. D.*, V, no. 387, p. 452.

[j] *Ibid.*, no. 394, p. 456. "Grey certainly played his cards with skill. He both evaded a Russian proposal which, in the form presented, was unsatisfactory,

wrong as Izvolsky had been, correct as the British refusal to help him was, British good faith on a revised attitude towards Russian aspirations at the Straits was also badly tainted.[k] Clearly the Straits question formed no recompense to Russia for the concessions made in the written agreement.

The convention of 1907 settled Asiatic rivalries exclusively, yet had its greatest importance in Europe — which it never mentioned. Great Britain had striven to bring Russia back into European affairs from a Far Eastern excursion as an additional source of strength against a growing, aggressive German ascendancy. The settlement of Anglo-Russian conflicts in Asia was first necessary before any benefits could accrue to the new friendship elsewhere in the world.[l] In its European aspect this convention removed the last traces of British isolation, and brought needed support against the possible hegemony of Germany in Europe. For Russia it has been assumed that it guaranteed security in the years required for recuperation and rehabilitation from war and revolution. An alliance with Great Britain could have afforded Russia military security in Europe only to a small extent. Help for the rebuilding came in the opening up of the London money market to assist France in supplying Russia with the funds needed in the process. At the time of its making, the Anglo-Russian convention was concluded in a spirit of defence of endangered national well-being: it was truly a reconciliation, not an entente.[m] German

and strengthened his own position with Turkey; . . ." Schmitt, *The Annexation of Bosnia*, p. 54.

[k] For an array of remarks by British diplomats opposing Grey's views and policy on the Straits question through 1915 see Taube, footnote 1, p. 366. Nicolson later insinuated that Izvolsky did not know precisely what he wanted. (Nicolson, pp. 265, 273.) Izvolsky clearly wanted to gain the right for Russian warships to pass in and out of the Straits freely, without the same right being accorded to foreign ships. Baron Taube is much closer to the truth when he charges that Izvolsky had not thought out whether it was to the best interests of Russia to have this change occur. Taube, pp. 164-165. See also Izvolsky's own later exposition: Hélène Iswolsky, "Les papiers d'Iswolsky. Correspondance inédite (1906)," *La revue de France*, XIV (1934), 430-431.

[l] *G. P.*, XXV, part I, no. 8536, pp. 44-45; no. 8537, p. 46. *B. D.*, III, no. 299, p. 267; IV, no. 507, p. 565; no. 510, p. 571; no. 544, and minutes, p. 605. The British foreign office anticipated that "the removal of all causes of discord in Asia will no doubt contribute to more harmonious relations between the two powers in Europe." *Ibid.*, no. 549, p. 616.

[m] In a descriptive leaflet for the fourth volume of the *British Documents* its title, "The Anglo-Russian Rapprochement," is justly defended as being selected

policy and expansion had done much to bring the two old enemies together, but the change from burning hatred to ardent love was not at once accomplished. At its inception the Anglo-Russian rapprochement had the strength of an infant; it was concluded in fear of Germany, not as an instrument of aggression deliberately forged against Germany. As late as July 1908 Nicolson characterized the need of a friendly Russia and France for the good of British international position, and how precariously balanced those relationships yet remained:

> If we wish, and I presume that we do wish, in the interest of peace, to avert the possibility of any power assuming a position from which she could dictate to others, a close understanding with France and Russia is, I submit, an object for the attainment of which every effort should be made. We have secured an undertaking with France. That with Russia is in its very early infancy, and will require, for reasons which I need not explain, careful nurture and treatment. Any serious check to this infant growth may kill it before it has advanced in years, and its disappearance would doubtless eventually react on our relations with France.[n]

Almost a year after its conclusion, therefore, the Anglo-Russian convention had cut no teeth. A gifted and conciliatory German foreign policy could probably have kept it toothless forever.

Several factors would have assisted Germany had the effort been made. The relations between the tsar and the kaiser had regained much of the cordiality that had been lost in the Björkö disaster. Their affectionate correspondence continued; their personal meetings had been resumed. In the years after 1905 the tsar was busy retaining as much of his power as he could. If ever the kaiser's verbal solicitude for the principle of monarchical solidarity had been supported by tangible acts, they could have reaped their handsome rewards from a threatened throne. For his own part Izvolsky regarded the new conven-

"in order to mark a shade of difference between it and the somewhat closer agreement known as the Anglo-French *Entente*." The most recent German work ignores this distinction in its title and in its treatment. See Ludwig Poltz, *Die Anglo-Russische Entente 1903-1907*, Winsen (Luhe), 1932.

[n] *B. D.*, IV, no. 516, p. 576.

tion "as a purely negative insurance and one which should not be allowed to affect his relations with the Central Powers." [o] In August 1907 it was still commonly believed that he leaned towards Germany, and that he desired to become Russian ambassador in Berlin, where he could be counted upon to promote "a closer understanding between his country and Germany." [p] After the convention was signed, the British foreign office expected him to do what favors he could to placate the strong western neighbor, to have "very intimate relations with Berlin, and a desire to follow advice and guidance from that capital." More than he could have known, Nicolson was right when he wrote that "it would be of great interest to follow the developments of Russian diplomacy in the near future." [q] Before and after the Reval meeting of King Edward and the tsar on 9 and 10 June 1908, Izvolsky continued to assure Germany that he wished for "the most cordial relations," while no new political combination or any widening of an old one was contemplated.[r] Izvolsky went out of his way to be agreeable to Germany in minor questions concerning the Baltic and North seas, the Åland islands, and German-Russian relations in Persia. Only after his merciless defeat in the Bosnian crisis did Izvolsky cease to cultivate German friendship.[s]

Most important of all, the Anglo-Russian convention itself was an unstable solution, by no means the firm foundation for future action that the German government believed from the beginning that it was. The British, however, knew that it was still a weak reed, not the result of a natural development. Nicolson was sure that if it had remained limited to an Asiatic settlement "it would unquestionably have led to a permanent estrangement between England and Russia." [t] This totally escaped German comprehension, so that the easiest way by which Great Britain and Russia could be kept apart was

[o] Nicolson, p. 260.
[p] *B. D.*, VI, no. 23, p. 41, and King Edward's minute, p. 42.
[q] *Ibid.*, IV, no. 544, pp. 604-605, and Grey's minute, p. 606; no. 548, p. 611.
[r] *G. P.*, XXV, part II, no. 8799, p. 441; no. 8802, pp. 445-448; no. 8810, pp. 458-461. Siebert, no. 553, p. 483.
[s] For details see Taube, pp. 113-158. *G. P.*, XXV, part I, pp. 101-175.
[t] Nicolson, pp. 261-262.

ignored. It was a serious flaw in the convention that it settled Anglo-Russian difficulties in Asia largely on the basis of existing positions, without regard for future possibilities. When Russia began to recover, its dissatisfaction with the limitations placed upon further expansion in central Asia increased, — another indication that Great Britain had gotten the best of the bargain. In a few years all was turmoil again, but one reason why the old rivalry was not resumed was because Great Britain tried to keep Russia in line in Europe. In Persia, particularly, the Russians took a high hand, while Great Britain remonstrated, acquiesced, and went along. Grey has admitted that "Persia tried my patience more than any other subject. I once told Benckendorff that if Russia made things too difficult the policy of friendly agreement with her might become impossible." [u] That threat never worried the Russians, who knew how badly their support was needed to prevent German domination in Europe.[v] Before 1914 both the Persian and Afghan settlements had become so unsatisfactory that new partitions, with additional profits for Russia, were being considered; while Tibet by 1912 had been effectively split into an Outer and Inner region, with Great Britain in control of the former. Under the influence of the world war, the secret treaty signed at St. Petersburg in 1915 promised full gratification for Russian traditional demands at Constantinople, in return for which another negotiation assigned most of the neutral zone of Persia to Great Britain, save for a few small bits to Russia. Early in 1917 a partition of Afghanistan, whereby Russia was to gain at least a commercial sphere in the north, was nearly ready for acceptance.[w] German policy

[u] Grey, I, 162. Onslow, *Slavonic Review*, VII, 551.

[v] Sazonov, the successor of Izvolsky as Russian foreign minister, wrote to Poklevsky-Kozell in Teheran on 25 September / 8 October 1910: "We may rest assured that the English, engaged in the pursuit of political aims of vital importance in Europe, may, in case of necessity, be prepared to sacrifice certain interests in Asia in order to keep a convention alive which is of such importance to them. This is a circumstance which we can, of course, exploit for ourselves, as, for instance, in Persian affairs." Siebert, no. 116, p. 99.

[w] For details see Siebert, pp. 49-141. Reisner, *Krasny Arkhiv*, X, 64-66. *Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 880-881. Rouire, note by F. Rothstein, (Russian edition), pp. 167-168. None, of course, of these contemplated sharings of the spoils of war ever materialized.

before the war had been of such a nature that it had failed to take any advantage of the tendencies of the Anglo-Russian rapprochement to crumble; on the contrary, it did more to keep Great Britain and Russia together, in spite of the disintegration of the Asiatic provisions of the convention of 1907, than any other factor.

German policy had been neither gifted nor conciliatory. The sight of other powers replacing their rivalries by agreements made possible by mutual sacrifices furnished an example which might have suggested German emulation, but did not. German policy was what Great Britain and Russia had expected it would be. Izvolsky had warned Nicolson in November 1907 that both nations must be prepared to see Germany assume "an active policy" which would cause trouble "not only in Persia . . . but everywhere." [x] It was first experienced in Persia where, despite disclaimers, Izvolsky thought the German government "to be too busy . . . and . . . anxious to gain a footing totally out of proportion to their actual interests." German presence was becoming an annoyance in Teheran, where Izvolsky feared it could develop a strong position, able to threaten Russian political predominance.[y] Early in the negotiations he had realized that he must buy off German hostility for fear of a repetition of the Morocco crisis, and he had begun to discuss an arrangement by which Germany should leave Russia alone in its northern Persian zone, in return for the surrender of Russian objections to plans for construction of the Bagdad railway. After the convention was signed, it was still felt that "some solatium" would have to be tendered Germany as a peace offering.[z] The Germans blamed Izvolsky for proceeding more slowly thereafter, as if he no longer desired an agreement. Izvolsky probably was not eager, for by then it was generally accepted that "in any understanding with Germany the latter power would gain all the advantages," while its diplomacy and policy were no

[x] *B. D.*, IV, no. 546, p. 608.
[y] *Ibid.*, no. 523, p. 583; no. 544, p. 605; no. 548, p. 610.
[z] *Ibid.*, no. 388, p. 430; no. 548, p. 610. Siebert, no. 549, p. 478. Izvolsky, *Correspondance diplomatique*, I, 103-105. For details of these negotiations see *G. P.*, XXV, part I, pp. 103-173.

longer trusted, so that "friendship with Germany soon lapses into vassalage." [a] German tactics had been persistently assertive in Persia in a rapid attempt to acquire trade and political influence. Izvolsky protested against this intrusive activity, but seldom had any lasting success, which produced a stronger desire "to act in the closest possible coöperation" with Great Britain.[b] In the reaction after the Russian government had felt itself left in the lurch by the British in the Bosnian crisis, by the Potsdam treaty of 1911, the kaiser obtained profitable terms for German commercial competition in northern Persia, and the withdrawal of Russian opposition to the Bagdad railway. Germany undertook to respect the political position of Russia in its Persian sphere, and to renounce the acquisition of railroad concessions within it.[c] This agreement, however, instituted no change in German foreign policy, which continued to be grasping and dictatorial. The Potsdam treaty caused no permanent rift in Anglo-Russian relations; so the British foreign office lived through what was only a bad fainting spell.

German apologetics have steadily ignored the nature of German policy, and have concentrated upon the doctrine of the deliberate encirclement of the empire, in attempting to establish the innocence of Germany for the outbreak of war in 1914. With this vital omission, the idea of encirclement is admirably suited to its purpose. There is no escape from the fact that Great Britain, France, and Russia composed a triplice in opposition to German activity, or that geographically they formed a loose ring around the German border. The doctrine was initially enunciated before the Anglo-Russian convention was signed, in which the rôle of instigator and prime mover was assigned to King Edward VII. Although the British king possessed no such power, nor wielded so great an influence, he is accused of plotting to keep Russia and Germany apart, be-

[a] *B. D.*, IV, no. 544, p. 604; no. 548, p. 610. Conrad Bornhak, *Die Kriegsschuld! Deutschlands Weltpolitik 1890-1914*, (Berlin, 1929), p. 414.

[b] *G. P.*, XXV, part I, pp. 147-173; part II, no. 8802, p. 447. *B. D.*, IV, no. 464, p. 509.

[c] Edward M. Earle, *Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Bagdad Railway*, (New York, 1923), pp. 239-242. Witte, *Vospominaniya*, II, 409; see English edition, p. 434. Dennis, p. 31.

sides building up the ring that hemmed Germany in, frustrating the proper aspirations and the natural expansion of that vigorous, young empire.[d] When the convention was signed, Miquel declared that it was due to the diplomatic skill of his chief, Ambassador von Schoen, that "it was not to be regarded as an advance of the British anti-German encirclement policy," although the kaiser noted his opposite opinion.[e] In this fine-spun theory the meeting between King Edward and Nicholas at Reval is a pivotal point, because it supposedly crowned the work of the convention and vitalized it against Germany. It was not so important a royal visit as many of those customarily exchanged between the kaiser and the tsar. The Reval meeting was outstanding primarily because it was the first time since he had ascended the throne that King Edward had visited Nicholas. From both sides the German government was fulsomely, and honestly, assured that nothing had been planned to the detriment of Germany.[f] Much of the mystery associated with the meeting has been induced by the insinuations and speculations of the encirclement propagandists. Emperor William's own conviction was definite: "Consequently financial reform of the empire! Many indirect taxes; strong fleet; strong army! Powder dry!" [g] It was precisely the attitude epitomized here that dominated German policy to 1914, and that insured the drawing together of a ring of nations increasingly more determined to keep the bull from breaking through. Yet the first great, open expression of this attitude, in the

[d] Stieve, p. 13. Bülow, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II, 29-30. E. Reventlow, *Deutschlands auswärtige Politik, 1888-1914*, (Berlin, 11th edition, 1918), pp. 313-314. Hermann Kantorowicz, *Der Geist der englischen Politik und der Gespenst der Einkreisung Deutschlands*, (Berlin, 1929), is the fullest discussion of the subject. It is an exoneration of Great Britain from the charge of deliberate encirclement of Germany, and an incisive dissection of the propaganda manufactured to sustain this delusion in vigor.

[e] *G. P.*, XXV, part I, no. 8538, p. 48.

[f] *Ibid.*, part II, pp. 441-494. Bülow, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II, 326-327. Witte, *Vospominaniya*, II, 432.

[g] *G. P.*, XXV, part II, no. 8807, kaiser's final note, p. 454. On 8 January 1909 he wrote the tsar that rumors of German uneasiness about the convention of 1907 and the visit at Reval were "all nonsense!" The cause for German concern was quite different. "It is the patent fact that for the last two years Russian policy has been gradually drawing away from us more and more, evolving always closer toward a combination of powers unfriendly to us." (*Kaiser's Letters*, pp. 223-224.) It is still characteristic of such German complaints that the question "why?" is never asked.

Bosnia-Herzegovina crisis, resulted in a resounding German victory, after which Bülow pronounced the fear of encirclement "a diplomatic illusion devoid of political actuality." [h] Indeed it seemed so, and much less was heard of the complaint of encirclement before 1914. Since then, frantic attempts have been made to infuse the idea with new life, so that it could perform its white-washing labors, but the verbal adornment of language remains its sole achievement.

Simply because the Anglo-French entente of 1904 and the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 formed two new groupings which, with the older Franco-Russian alliance, laid the foundation for the triple entente, peaceful relations between these powers and Germany were not necessarily impossible. Izvolsky had been anxious to keep on the best possible terms with Germany despite the convention with Great Britain, if for no other reason than that he could not afford to do otherwise.[i] France originally desired negative advantages from the new arrangements, hoping they would be strong enough to prevent either an intolerable check upon its national ambition, or a bloody collision forced by Germany.[j] Grey stuck to his early opinion that there could be friendly Anglo-German relations, provided they did not involve forsaking France and Russia, although he had to put the proviso with increasing seriousness in 1911 in his speech before the Committee on Imperial Defence:

> We must make it a cardinal condition in all our negotiations with Germany that if we come to any understanding with Germany of a public kind which puts us on good relations with Germany it must be an understanding which must not put us back into the old bad relations with France and Russia. . . . It must also be clear that, side by side with that, it will become equally apparent that there is no chance of a disturbance of the peace between Germany and France or Germany and Russia.[k]

Before war came, all three entente powers either had made, or were negotiating to make, colonial agreements with Germany

[h] Lee, II, 732.
[i] *B. D.*, IV, no. 544, p. 604; no. 548, pp. 610-611. Nicolson, p. 260.
[j] *Livre noir*, I, 16.
[k] *B. D.*, VI, Appendix V, p. 783.

which contained important concessions to the expansive ambitions of the vigorous, young empire belatedly seeking its place in the sun. Peace, and good relations, could have existed.

The Anglo-Russian convention, born out of fear into weakness, for the better defence of long established interests against unwelcome, persistent German intrusion, survived its inherent unnaturalness under the blows of German attempts to destroy it. The more German policy took occasion to test its strength in successive international crises, the firmer it found the strange association to be holding together. The future of the convention, the determination of Great Britain and Russia to oppose further advances by Germany, was not plotted at Reval, but arose out of the humiliation of the Bosnian trial prepared for them.[l] The same menacing German attitude that made the Anglo-French entente truly cordial only after the first Morocco crisis, transformed the thin Anglo-Russian rapprochement into a second entente, never quite cordial, but effective enough for all that. Unchanging German policy which by its arrogance and assertiveness brought those ententes into being, also kept them alive. They grew stronger year by year, better able and perfectly willing to preserve their cherished national interests from molestation; but actively aggressive against Germany, or desirous of war, they never were.[m] Even in 1929 an intelligent, well-mannered German audience became restive when the sympathetic Dr. George P. Gooch, in a quiet, almost plaintively pleading voice, read to it his reasoned judgment:

> Neither Lansdowne nor Grey ever thought to plan or to support the encirclement of Germany. An undertaking of this nature would have bordered upon insanity. It was, however, possible that we would become involved in the quarrels of our new friends, not one of which was con-

[l] "It was the violent attitude adopted by Austria and Germany in the Bosnian crisis which transformed what was a negative arrangement applicable only to Asia into a positive understanding applicable mainly to Europe." Nicolson, p. 261.

[m] G. P. Gooch, "Die Entstehung der Triple Entente," *Berliner Monatshefte*, VII (1929), 597-599. (This is the printed summary of two lectures read in German by Dr. Gooch in the English seminar building at the University of Berlin on 21 and 22 February 1929, which the writer attended.) See also *Livre noir*, I, 8, 12.

tent with the *status quo*. It was also possible that the policy of the Central Powers could drive us to a closer friendship with France or Russia than we wished for, and that the entente could be finally transformed into something which was not unlike an alliance.[n]

That transformation came to the Anglo-Russian convention most of all because it was more profitable for the two old enemies to bury their own hatreds to face unitedly the greater dangers that German policy and tactics presented. In less than a decade from the time the German foreign office had believed that Great Britain and Russia could never agree, the convention of 1907 was a reality. In less than another decade that feeble association had grown to sufficient intimacy so that the two contracting parties started out partners in the greatest of wars. At a time so early that his words were guesses, on 24 February 1908, right after parliament had accepted this Anglo-Russian convention, but with amazing accuracy, Sir Edward Grey divined the future career that it could have:

I am quite pleased, from the point of view of general policy, that events are bringing Russia and us together. But a combination of Britain, Russia, and France in the Concert must for the present be a weak one. France has her hands full in Morocco, and is naturally reluctant to run the risk of even diplomatic friction in connection with any other matter which might re-act [*sic*] unfavorably on her in Morocco. Russia is weak after the war, and her internal affairs are anything but secure.

Ten years hence, a combination of Britain, Russia, and France may be able to dominate Near Eastern policy; and within that time events will probably make it more and more clear that it is to the interest of Russia and us to work together; but we must go slowly.[o]

[n] Gooch, *Berliner Monatshefte*, VII, 596. Among the notes made by the writer at that time, an indication supports memory that the audience broke out at this point with scattered muffled, negative gutterals, interspersed with a few louder cries. Others made the amusing German sibillant sound for the restoration of quiet that often is more disturbing than the disturbance. The chairman partly rose, and extended a restraining hand. The commotion ceased, to be followed by a slightly nervous, but good-natured mirth. The lecturer continued with merely the slightest break in his pace, but a sensitive point had been touched.

[o] *B. D.*, IV, no. 550, pp. 616-617.

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